

February 10, 2003

To: Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, Chair
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: David E. Janssen
Chief Administrative Officer

MOTION TO SUPPORT SB 59 (ESCUTIA) – WRIT PROCEDURE FOR THE REVIEW OF PLACEMENT ORDERS AFFECTING THE ADOPTION OF DEPENDENT CHILDREN – (ITEM NO. 15, AGENDA OF FEBRUARY 11, 2003)

Item No. 15 on your agenda for Tuesday, February 11, 2003, is a motion by Supervisors Molina and Antonovich to support SB 59 (Escutia), send five-signature letters conveying the Board's position to the Senate Judiciary Committee, the Los Angeles County Delegation and Senator Escutia; and direct our County Lobbyist to help ensure its passage.

Currently, it can take anywhere from ten months to a year to resolve an appeal to a court's placement order for a dependent child. During the appeal process, a child may form a close attachment and bond to the family with whom the child resides, only to face possible replacement once the appeal is decided. This results in a substantial delay in creating permanence for the child and may cause severe emotional trauma.

As introduced, SB 59 would establish a writ procedure for the review of all placement orders affecting the adoption of dependent children, instead of relying on the lengthy appeals process. The average dependency writ, heard on the merits, takes approximately three months to complete.

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) requested the Chief Administrative Office to include this issue in the County's State Legislative Agenda. It is listed as Item 3 in Attachment II – County-Sponsored Program-Specific Goals – in the

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State Agenda which is also under consideration by your Board at the February 11, 2003 meeting. **Therefore, DCFS recommends that the County sponsor SB 59, and we concur.** Support for this recommendation is consistent with existing County policy to support efforts to increase adoptions for dependent children.

SB 59 is currently in the Senate Judiciary Committee and may be heard on, or after February 15, 2003. There is no known support or opposition at this time.

We will continue to keep you advised.

DEJ:GK
EW:ib

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Department of Children and Family Services